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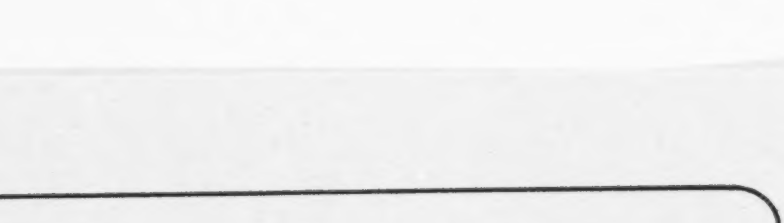
THE AMERICAN STUDENT LEFT



an historical essay by Carl F. Rosenthal

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ABSTRACT

This essay outlines the course and character of the American student leftist movement during the twentieth century. It summarizes the earlier character of student leftism and then describes how the "New Left" developed, its constellation of beliefs, and its tactics and objectives. A principal conclusion is that hard-core student activists quite consciously seek confrontations and that university officials frequently play into hands of the dissidents by calling in the police before trying other alternatives for resolving the conflict. Accordingly, this essay suggests the critical importance of developing new strategies of the types that lead to the management of conflict within institutionalized democratic procedures.

THE AMERICAN STUDENT LEFT: AN HISTORICAL ESSAY

In times of accelerated social change, various segments of society begin to question the pertinence of the core values and institutional arrangements in society. Historically, the universities have been the centers for debate on the relevance of traditional forms and for the germination of new ideas to solve pressing social problems. Quite understandably, then, students are in an institutional setting that is appropriate for adopting advanced and heterodox social ideals. Freedom from intellectual restraints, coupled with the typical idealism of youth, help to explain why students have been in the forefront of radical movements. As examples, students played an important role in setting off the chain reaction in European revolutions in 1848, in helping to overthrow the czarist institution and, more recently, in the Western hemisphere, in sowing the seeds out of which the Castro movement developed. Strikingly, however, the tradition of student radicalism has had only a feeble parallel in America until quite recently.

Certainly, tranquil student bodies cannot be the only reason for the absence of a radical tradition. Attacks on American educational institutions date from the beginnings of the institutions themselves. Between 1800 and 1830, Princeton was subject to no less than six rebellions. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century student uprisings also occurred at Miami University, Brown, the University of South Carolina, Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Lafayette, Bowdoin, City College of New York, Dickinson, and De Paul. Until the present decade, the stormiest era in the history of American colleges was the period from 1880 to 1895 when not only demonstrations and strikes but also widespread violence erupted at Dartmouth, Union, Bowdoin, Wesleyan, Amherst, and Middlebury.

Despite similarities between European and American students in terms of exuberance and physical militancy, there were more essential differences. Unlike the European radical tradition, American students were not "alienated" from society and were not ideologically oriented. For the most part, student disturbances in the United States evolved from felt injustices particular to the university environment such as bureaucratic irresponsibility, faculty incompetence, or irrelevant curriculum requirements. These grievances were seldom linked to issues outside the university context. Not until the beginning of the next century did the outlines of a student movement emerge that resembled the European pattern.

The student movement of the first half of the twentieth century had a tone and direction that distinguished it from the earlier era of protest:

(1) The student movement tied inequities in the university to the larger social, political, and economic ills in society.

(2) It was ideological and academic in orientation.

(3) It was coordinated and controlled by adult groups of various ideological persuasions.

(4) It ultimately foundered as a result of growing rancor between non-Communist and Communist groups.

Later in this paper there will be a discussion of ways in which the student movement of the present decade differs essentially from traditional leftist youth movements.

The Intercollegiate Socialist Society was the first noteworthy leftist movement to emerge on American campuses. It was established in 1905 by such well-known personalities as Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Clarence Darrow, Walter Lippman, John Reed, and Harry Laidler. By present standards, the aims of the society were more reformist than revolutionary in character. Although the Society did not oppose free enterprise, it deprecated the influence of monopolies and cartels and the power of big city political machines such as Tammany Hall. According to the Society, these interests were so powerful that they controlled the system of American education, even at the university level. Upton Sinclair elaborated this viewpoint in his work, The Goose Step: A Study of American Education, published in 1922. He alleged that the plutocrats of wealth controlled and administere the universities as if they were subsidiary corporations. Not only did they handpick the members of the university governing councils, but they also passed judgment on the suitability of the curriculum and the competence of the faculty members.

Since the times were adverse to public discussion of radical notions, the Society's numbers were small, its activities essentially academic and intellectual, and its meetings secret. After college graduation, members of the Society established the League for Industrial Democracy, intended to be the American counterpart of the British Socialist Fabian Society. Despite shifting changes of fortune, the League for Industrial Democracy has had an uninterrupted existence. It has served at times as the adult sponsor for various leftist student groups, including, for a while, the Students for a Democratic Society.

During the 1920s, the leftist movement on and off the campus faded into obscurity. A vigorous prosecution campaign by the national and state governments against radicals, along with dissension within and between groups, contributed to the decline of organized leftism. In fact, the combined strength of the leftist groups in the 1920s, both in its Socialist and Communist forms, was smaller than that of the Socialist Party alone in the years preceding the war.

Not surprisingly, the Great Depression stimulated the revival of leftist parties. Under their guidance, various student groups were organized. The most important of these were the National Student League (the Communist campus group) and the Student League for Industrial Democracy. Both student organizations had chapters at most prominent universities during the 1930s. Particularly in the case of Communist student groups, the chapters were tightly organized and centrally directed by the parent organization. Rarely did the statements or actions of the youthful adherents deviate significantly from party lines.

Another characteristic of the campus movement was that student activities were primarily academic and intellectual, although they frequently participated in organizational activities. On campus, student activism involved recruiting new members and petitioning for the right to engage in political activities. Off campus, they participated in movements to organize the unemployed and to strengthen the fledgling trade unions.

During the mid-1930s, conditions seemed ripe for the further expansion of the leftist movement as unemployment continued to remain at a high level. Disillusioned with laissez-faire economics, many students were attracted by the explanations and solutions offered by Socialists and Communists. Instead of expanding, however, the student Left (as well as the leftist movement) eventually became weaker and then virtually collapsed.

Any explanation for the collapse of the student movement must principally consider Communist machinations. Better trained in organizational tactics, the Communists succeeded in attracting the student affiliates from adult liberal and Socialist groups and uniting them into a single conglomerate. As events developed, the consolidated student movement became more of a tool to further the Soviet Union's political and military objectives than it was a means of radicalizing the student population. With each new twist in Comintern policy, members of the student movement were asked to adopt a new position. The result was that the toll of desertions steadily mounted. Eventually, the student movement subdivided to the point of nonexistence.

1935, the Comintern line veered sharply from a militantly leftist position to one not too dissimilar from that of the Democratic administration. The abrupt tactical change was signaled too when abuse against liberals and Socialists was succeeded by the call for a united front of the so-called progressive forces. At the campus level, popular front tactics took the form of pressing for the unification of all leftist and liberal groups into a single national organization. It did not take long for the Communists to overcome opposition. Before the year's end, the Communist National Student League, the Socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy, and various liberal youth organizations combined to form the American Student Union. At its peak strength, the Union had a national membership approaching 20,000 as well as a larger number of unregistered supporters.

At first, the American Student Union's international position was pacifist. Its members were urged to declare their opposition to the involvement of the United States in another international war. To underline this position, the Union voted to endorse the Oxford Pledge and many of its members signed the Pledge not to fight in the service of their country even if forced. As an indicator of the depth of pacifist sentiment, it is reliably estimated that more than 200,000 students turned out in response to the Union's call for a day of antiwar protest rallies.

The union of liberals, Socialists, and Communists did not last long as a result of the next Soviet move. From an antiwar position, the Comintern now swung in the direction of advocating a collective security arrangement of anti-Fascist states. Pacifist and Socialist members of the American Student Union were appalled, and refused to abandon their original position. Consequently, the Union split along the lines of those who favored the position of collective security and those who were committed to the principles of the Oxford Pledge. Because the advocates of collective security were able to control the 1937 national convention, the pacifists along with many Socialists withdrew from the Union. In the following year, the remaining Socialist element severed its ties with the Union and attempted unsuccessfully to reestablish an independent Socialist student movement.

Despite the large-scale desertions, the American Student Union continued to function. Although reliable data are absent, it seems that the membership of the Union was composed of idealistic liberals, an uncategorizable number of discontents, and a large Communist element. What is clear, however, is that Union policies coincided for the most part with Communist ones. Even more important, the abrupt shifts in Communist tactics had led to the virtual destruction of the student leftist movement. Aside from the miniscule Socialist and Trotskyite youth groups, the American Student Union in the late 1930s was the only remaining alternative on the Left.

The final blow to the student leftist movement was not long in coming. Following the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact in August 1939, Communist strategy swung full circle from collective security and antifascism back to the 1935 antiwar position. Comintern tactics

became unpalatable even to many Communists, and some of them resigned from the adult and youth groups. Virtually without membership, the American Student Union dissolved. By 1940, organized student leftism had almost disappeared and subsequent efforts during the war years to revitalize the student movement were unavailing.

Following the war, the Communists and Socialists attempted separately to promote nationwide student affiliates. Once again, Soviet calculations were linked to international policy considerations. With the outbreak of the Cold War, the Communists sought to mobilize opposition to American foreign policy in the Balkans, the Far East, and Southeast Asia. In 1947 the Progressive Party was established with Henry Wallace as its presidential candidate. Having only a marginal base, the Communists hoped to attain their objectives by supporting Wallace and the movement to create a broadly based new third party. The youth adjunct of the new party was the Young Progressives which, before the 1948 elections, claimed a membership of 10,000. Had it not been for the organizational efforts of the American Youth for Democracy, a Communist youth front formed at the end of the war, the Young Progressives probably would not have gained so large a membership. At any rate, the Progressive Party and its youth affiliate, as well as the Communist American Youth for Democracy, quickly faded after the disastrous showing by Wallace in the presidential election.

Other attempts were made by the Communists during the late 1940s and during the 1950s to establish mass-based student and youth groups, but none of these fronts succeeded in attracting more than a handful of adherents. One explanation is that during the 1950s students were relatively apathetic about political issues. Even more important in long-range terms, students had become disillusioned with the packaged ideological solutions of the traditional Left. In a century unparalleled in terms of human and material destruction, students were also increasingly questioning the wisdom of adult leadership.

Student suspicions were reinforced by events in the Communist world. In 1956, the crimes of Stalin were exposed and, during the same year, Soviet troops invaded Hungary. These events had the effect of shattering the U.S. Communist Party and its youth affiliate, the Labor Youth League.

The Socialist wing was also having minimal success in promoting a nationwide youth and student movement. Although untainted by the stains of Soviet imperialism, the Socialists were attacked for thinking in anachronistic terms. Instead of confronting current problems with new solutions, it was alleged that Socialist thinking was still rigidly locked in terms of the issues of the 1930s. The unpopularity of traditional socialism is apparent when one realizes that no Socialist youth group numbered more than 500 during the 40s and 50s.

Ironically, developments on the campus in the late 50s and early 60s seemed to portend the growth of conservatism on campus. The right-wing Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) claimed chapters in universities throughout the country and a sizable membership. Moderates and liberals alike feared that the YAF would eventually be in a position to control the national convention of the United States National Student Association, the organization of student government groups. At this time, however, other less visible but more significant forces were converging from an opposite political direction. From the convergence of those forces developed a new, largely student-based radicalism, much different in tone and character from the leftist movement of the preceding era.

The so-called "New Left' has had a shocking impact. Members' actions seem to many bizarre, purposeless, almost suicidal in nature: they sometimes clothe popular demands for reform in the language of repulsive obscenities; they condemn the democratic system as it

presently exists and, at the same time, damn the Socialists and Communists as rightists and reactionaries. Not surprisingly, many Americans are puzzled by this spectacle. They ask how the New Left developed, what its system of beliefs consists of, and what its tactics and objectives are.

The New Left had its genesis in the race problem. The 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision raised the hopes and expectations of the Southern Negro population. Disillusionment soon followed, however, when certain states adopted measures to avoid compliance with the decision. Under these circumstances, student activists—mostly from segregated Negro colleges—began a campaign to dramatize injustices. They hit upon the tactic of civil disobedience. The philosophical basis behind civil disobedience is that it is just to violate inequitable laws to achieve the supremely moral goal of full equality of all men. The Southern Negro crusade electrified many students in the North, white and black. Many of them came South in behalf of the civil rights struggle.

Other forces were converging during the late 1950s to mold a new, largely student-based Left. Two very important currents emanated from abroad: the new leftist youth movement in Great Britain and Fidel Castro's movement in Cuba. Universities and Left Review, which began publication in Great Britain in 1956, soon gained an active readership at American universities. Review concepts appealed to many reform-minded students who were disillusioned with the traditional approaches of the past. Not until three years later, however, could American students claim to have a new leftist publication of their own.

If the British leftist youth movement provided the philosophical foundation of an American student reformist movement, it was Fidel Castro who provided much of the inspiration. Students of leftist orientation considered Castro an idealistic, revolutionary leader, who was unmarked by the scars of old Left orthodoxy. They saw new hope in Castro and his movement, and some gained direct inspiration by visiting the island to see the workings of the revolution firsthand.

During the early 1960s, to most Americans the student movement seemed to be a harmless outburst of youthful idealism. Neither the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), formed in 1960, nor the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), established in 1961, espoused revolutionary doctrines. Their philosophies seemed reformist in nature, dedicated to the civil rights goal of full equality for all men. For this reason, there was considerable adult sympathy for the goals of these organizations and for student civil rights activities in the South, even though laws were sometimes violated in an effort to secure equal rights.

Two events occurred during the mid-1960s, however, that gave a far different impression of the New Left and left a decidedly negative image of that group in the minds of the American people. The so-called Berkeley Student Revolt dramatically forewarned that the students would henceforth also direct their energies to seek reform in the North. Even more important in long-range terms was the conflict in Vietnam; it turned many students from preoccupation with civil rights issues to concern about the justice of our fundamental institutions.

The events of the 1964 Berkeley Student Revolt are well chronicled. Briefly, it arose from the activities of civil rights groups on and off the campus. As the protest developed, heated emotions led to a change in student tactics. In addition to the usual tactics of picketing, petitionings, and so on, the students began to employ the direct action techniques learned in the South to desegregate public facilities. From the Berkeley revolt, the public discovered that student activism was to encompass more than just "Dixie" while the students discovered

that direct action techniques could cripple a major university and, thereby, force the administration to grant concessions. The tactics employed by the Berkeley activists were soon imitated by protestors at other campuses across the country. One of the most violent and well publicized just recently occurred at Harvard University.

Although the Berkeley disturbance indicated the conscious extension of direct action techniques to the North, most observers consider that the war in Vietnam has far more important implications: it is considered the factor most responsible for the radicalization of the student Left. Considerable controversy was stirred on the campuses and elsewhere by the decision in early 1965 to bomb military targets in North Vietnam. At the University of Michigan, students and faculty joined together to protest the decision. In their dissent, the antiwar protestors used direct action tactics and virtually closed down the University. As the price for restoring order, the University administration conceded to students the right to hold protest meetings against the war on campus facilities. The University of Michigan teach-ins set a nationwide pattern. Soon teach-ins were held in many other major universities throughout the United States and, in addition, in several foreign lands.

Since the Berkeley revolt and the decision that United States troops would play a major role in the Vietnam War, student leftists have widened their attack on society to include the entire pattern of socioeconomic arrangements. SDS and SNCC were not the only radical youth groups to reject the core values of American society. A host of new extremist groups arose, including: The Vietnam Day Committee, Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, the Black Panthers, the Independent Student Union, the Black African Republicanists, and others. The multiplication of extremist groups competing for the same membership has impelled leftist organizations to adopt even more radical stances. If SNCC and SDS had not kept pace with the movement toward a more extreme position, they probably would have lost preeminence among left-wing student groups.

In recent years, the most important development has been the split between black and white leftists. Negro youth groups have become increasingly exclusionist, as symbolized by slogans such as "black power." Ironically, the first ruptures developed because of Negro reluctance to join antiwar groups, feeling that any identification in the public mind of the civil rights issue with the antiwar movement would compromise their political effectiveness. Because of mounting frustration and alienation, however, the position of Negro groups toward the war changed abruptly. The growing mood of black militancy was signaled by the election in May 1965 of Stokely Carmichael as chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Abandoning the former position of SNCC, Carmichael discounted integration as the principal goal of the civil rights movement. Furthermore, he began to link the progress of the civil rights movement with the success of the so-called third world liberation movements and with the tide of opposition to the war in Vietnam. Floyd McKissick, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), also changed the approach of his organization from advocating integration and civil rights legislation to advocating black power.

In an effort to bridge the widening gap between black and white leftists and to establish a basis for coordinated opposition to administration policies, a convention was held in Chicago during August and September 1967. Instead of healing wounds, the events of the convention exacerbated them. Before anyone realized what was happening, the black power advocates succeeded in gaining control over the convention, and the white majority found themselves submitting to divisive proposals. The dream of a united front of black and white activists, along with liberal elements, was dashed by rivalry and intrigue. Since the Chicago convention, the breach has become even more evident.

Although the historical outlines of the New Left are relatively easy to chart, it is much more difficult to describe briefly the organizational character and the ideological rationale of the New Left. Unlike the radical movements of the previous generation, the New Left is an amorphous, disunified phenomenon. In fact, it is much easier to describe what the New Left is not than what it is.

One barb has described the New Left as a "many splintered thing." Unlike past left-wing movements, which were relatively tightly structured and centrally directed, the New Left is different. It is composed of numerous organizations that agree on some issues but disagree on others. Even within organizations, moreover, chapters have considerable autonomy.

The New Left also differs from traditional radical movements in terms of political orientation. In contrast to the "old Left," which had absolute faith in a social philosophy for reform or revolution, New Left adherents contend that they are not committed in toto to any brand of ideology. Although new leftists would admit subscribing to certain Socialist tenets, they reject the "packaged" belief systems of both the Socialists and Communists. In fact, the preoccupation of Socialists and Communists with hairsplitting ideological debates is considered absurd.

Not only does the New Left reject the intellectual orientation of the old Left, it also rejects their tutelage. In the opinion of New Left adherents, the traditional leftist parties have discredited themselves by compromises over the years with the "establishment." Even more striking is their antiliberal orientation. They see the liberals representing the foremost impediment to equitable changes in the social system. According to New Left thinking, the liberal expressions of concern about the existence of misery and poverty is just a ploy to keep the deprived quiet. Apparently, new leftists see few important differences between Democrats and Republicans and, in fact, consider that the parties are in league with each other.

Although the New Left rejects the tutelage of adult organizations, it does not exclude cooperation with them when it suits its tactical purposes. In fact, new leftists boast on occasion of "using" Communists to further their aims. Unlike most liberals and Socialists, they do not consider it immoral to cooperate with Communists. In their foreign outlook, moreover, they refuse to condemn all Communist leaders. Many of them are great admirers of figures such as Fidel Castro and Marshal Tito, and many also believe that South Vietnam would be better off under Communist rule.

The irreverence of the New Left rankles Socialists and liberals who believe that the youthful activists have not taken the lessons of history seriously. Older radicals also impugn the New Left for not taking seriously Socialist theory or the dangers of communism. In fact, the dispute over the issue of cooperation with Communists was, in large measure, responsible for the 1965 severance of relations between the Students for a Democratic Society and the founder of SDS, the Socialist-oriented League for Industrial Democracy. Black power groups, too, are not opposed to cooperating with Communists and, moreover, are patronizing toward the moderate civil rights organizations. Among Negroes, the generational division on the race issue is particularly sharp. Whereas older and more experienced civil rights leaders point to the progress made during the last two decades, the younger generation tends to dwell on the existence of continuing inequities. Like SDS, SNCC and other black militant groups reject adult control.

It is much easier to discuss what the New Left is against than what it is for. To some extent, the problem is one of semantics: new leftists tend to explain events in existentialist terms rather than in the familiar methodological style of empiricism or postivism.

Without becoming obscure, some general observations can be made on the essential ideas of New Left thought. Individually considered, these ideas have counterparts in other social movements; taken together, however, they form a distinct belief.

The existentialist New Left is an "intellectual mix" of antischolasticism, utopianism, and activism. The New Left is antischolastic in that it considers as irrelevant facts that have no social content. For example, they condemn scholarly activity that leads to the enumeration of hoary unconnected facts devoid of meaning for the betterment of mankind. What original scholarship does occur at the universities, according to the New Left, promotes the existing pattern of socioeconomic arrangements. They believe that the trouble with the universities reflects the trouble with society as a whole, that society places priority upon material production over human advancement, and that the universities emphasize the assemblyline training of students rather than the cultivation of intellect.

The New Left is also utopian in orientation. Although a programed plan of social action is contrary to the spirit of the movement, the New Left constantly looks beyond from what is to what could be. What the New Left searches for is a vision of society, transcending present reality, in which the ideals of reason, justice, and freedom can be truly realized. In the New Left apocalypse, the creation of the ideal society will have to be the work of the genuinely dispossessed, the only element uncorrupted historically. Contrary to Marxist thinking, however, there is nothing inevitable about the movement of social forces; hence, the call to action.

Only when antischolasticism and utopianism are combined with the existential commitment to action is the New Left set apart from other political orientations. Critics assert that the stress on direct action indicates that the new leftists are really only nihilists, blind to their passions and ignorant of the consequences of their actions. Sympathizers, on the other hand, assert that action-oriented radicalism is necessary to awaken people to the reality of impending disaster. Because steady progress is not inevitable, the New Leftists consider the commitment to action all the more urgent, although they realize that the consequences of their actions are unpredictable. Thus, in his article, "The New Left," Daniel Cohn-Bendit characterizes the role of political activists as that of setting the stage for and initiating popular upheaval. Similarly, Huey Newton of the Black Panthers was quoted by the militant organ, The Movement (August 1968) as declaring the essentiality of the activist role in awakening the political consciousness of the masses:

> The large majority of black people are either illiterate or semi-illiterate. They don't read. They need activity to follow. . . . The same thing happened in Cuba where it was necessary for twelve men with a leadership of Che and Fidel to take to the hills and then attack the corrupt administration . . . they could have leafleted the community and they could have written books, but the people would not respond. They had to act and the people could see and hear about it and therefore become educated on how to respond to oppression.
>
> In this country, black revolutionaries have to set an example.

In more precise terms, how does the splintered New Left expect to broaden the basis of its support for revolutionary goals, particularly when the combined following of the student Left is only about 100,000 and of this number only a fraction are hard-core activists? Although a small number of militants such as Huey Newton advocate guerrilla warfare, most radicals consider terrorist tactics inappropriate and unrealistic at this time. Rather, most hard-core activists advocate direct action or confrontation—a perversion of the original inspiration behind civil disobedience—as the most effective way of exposing the inequity of the system.

Observers agree that it is all too easy (and dangerous) to dismiss their thinking as infantile and their plan of action as absurd. If one accepts certain premises, New Left thinking and tactics reveal no mean political acumen. Their basic premise is that our present system of government is rigged in favor of vested interests. The democratic concept of tolerance—the belief that all have the right to express their views—is considered the sham by which the "establishment" maintains itself in power. Herein, according to the radicals, is the trap in which so many idealistic reformers have been caught. Free discussion of ideas is a safety valve for reducing emotions and the level of revolutionary passions. Whenever reformers accept the forum method, therefore, the establishment is able to maintain a friendly, sympathetic face and does not have to reveal the brute force underlying the system. Operating through the established institutional machinery of government, moreover, turns crusaders into compromisers. Above all, playing the traditional rules of the game serves to sanctify the system of government and to lull the masses into quiescence instead of stirring them into action.

In New Left strategy, the forum method is to be avoided except when absolutely necessary. Even when it is necessary for tactical purposes, the militants seek to disrupt the dialogue by wild statements and verbal abuses. Whenever the authorities walk out of the conference and call in the police, they play into the hands of the radicals. Anytime the authorities have to resort to force, instead of discussions and forums, the quality and sanctity of the democratic system is impaired. In a recent interview, Stokely Carmichael summed up the rationale behind New Left tactics when he stated that any demonstration in which the authorities are not maneuvered into a position of using force is a failure for the demonstrators and for the movement.

The hard-core activists, therefore, continuously seek confrontations and quite consciously want the authorities to resort to nondemocratic procedures. By linking widely shared grievances to impossible demands, the radicals have shown how easy it is to force the authorities to call the police onto the campus or into the ghetto. If the police overreact, the radicals win a moral victory: the activists gain the support of those onlookers who see justice in some of the demands voiced and of those citizens who are offended by excessive violence.

Last year's disturbance at Columbia University illustrates how effectively the tactic of confrontation can be used to discredit the authorities and gain the sympathy of uncommitted spectators. After much vacillation, the president of Columbia University called in the police to eject the protestors from the occupied buildings. Under the duress of verbal and, at times, physical abuse, some police officers overreacted with the result that many innocent bystanders, both students and faculty, were injured. Incensed by this display of force, the student body rallied in defense of the heretofore small bands of dissidents. What the protestors were not able to accomplish by their sit-ins was, in effect, accomplished for them by the police—radicalization of the Columbia campus. In the day following the confrontation, virtually the entire student body heeded the call for a strike against the university. As at many other universities, the strike at Columbia served as the yeast to increase suspicions and enlarge the differences between students and faculty.

In conclusion, we should not forget that the spasms of extremist activity on the campus as well as in the cities are symptoms of more fundamental social and economic changes occurring in society. As yet, only a small minority seeks redress by means outside the perimeters of established democratic procedures. The vast majority of politically oriented students disavow violence and strongly support the democratic system. Even most adherents of the New Left can be won back by a patient and sympathetic approach. However, wishful thinking will not stifle the mounting alienation and frustration. If we are to preserve the integrity of our system of government, most observers agree that fresh thinking must be brought to developing new approaches for curing the psychological and social ills that engender the deep divisions in society.

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